

AGRICULTURE

Temperatures averaged below normal for much of the week, bringing some relief from last week's hot weather. Widely scattered showers and thunderstorms on Thursday did little to alleviate prevailing dry conditions. Hot and humid weather returned by Sunday, with heat indices in the 90's across much of the area. Outdoor activities included cutting and baling hay, harvesting summer vegetables, irrigating fields and spraying. Days suitable for field work averaged 6.3. Top soil moisture was rated 20% very short, 55% short, and 25% adequate. Corn silked 35%. Corn condition was rated 55% fair and 45% good. Producers reported increased insect pressure in some fields due to recent weather conditions. Soybeans blooming 30%. Soybean condition was rated 23% fair and 77% good. Clear skies and light winds provided excellent drying conditions for hay. Livestock producers increased supplemental feeding of their herds due to dry pastures. Vegetable and fruit producers irrigated fields and scouted for pests. Sweet corn, tomato, and cucumber harvest continued on schedule. Peach producers made good progress harvesting early varieties, with good quality and quantity reported. Apples were rated in mostly fair to good condition. Blueberries were rated in mostly good condition, with harvest continuing on schedule. Grapes were also rated in mostly good condition, although some vineyard producers reported minor pest problems due to recent weather conditions.

SOIL MOISTURE TABLE

	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	PREVIOUS YEAR
VERY SHORT	20%	20%	5%
SHORT	55%	50%	43%
ADEQUATE	25%	30%	52%
SURPLUS	0%	0%	0%

RANGE AND PASTURE

	CURRENT	PREVIOUS WEEK	PREVIOUS YEAR
VERY POOR	0%	0%	4%
POOR	36%	22%	7%
FAIR	47%	51%	52%
GOOD	17%	27%	37%
EXCELLENT	0%	0%	0%

JERSEY FRESH AVAILABILITY FOR JULY 29, 2002

Blueberries – Harvesting Elliott variety now. Quality has been excellent though heat is increasing ripening and hastening the end of the commercial season. Decreasing quantities of fruit will be available from now on.

Cabbage – Green, Red, and Savoy available in quantity and quality. Volume and size has been less with the hotter weather.

Cantaloupes – The hot weather is hastening the ripening and available volume. Sizes are also a little smaller. Fair volume is available now with quantity increasing weekly.

Collards & Escarole/Endive – Good quality and decreasing quantity available now. Hot weather causing lighter quantities to be available. Will be available throughout the Summer.

Cucumbers - Good quality and lessening quantity available due to the heat. Some growers starting to plant now for fall harvest.

Eggplant – Good quality with fair quantity available, and increasing each week.

Italian Eggplant – Good quality with quantity increasing each week. Volume is building.

Sicilian Eggplant – Good quality with only fair quantity, increasing each week.

Green Beans – Good quality but hot weather causing more size variability.

Green Onions – Good quality and quantity available.

Herbs – Lighter quantities available now for Cilantro, Dill, Parsley, Arugula, and Baby Arugula with hot weather stretches causing some mid-summer light availability of these and other herbs. Some herbs though, like Basil, Mint, and Mustard like the hot weather and thrive in this kind of heat. Expect most herbs other than Arugula to be available all summer.

Leeks - Good quality and increasing quantity of spring planted varieties being dug now.

Napa Cabbage – Quantity and quality available now.

Nectarines - Varieties being picked now are Summer Beaut and Sunglo. Quantities building each week. Mid-August is the heaviest volume time with great quantities of Red Gold and Fantasia varieties available then. Will be available through the end of August.

Peppers – Quality and quantity are available now.

Pickles (Kirby cucumbers) – Good quality and lessening quantity available due to the heat. Some growers starting to plant now for Fall harvest.

Plum Tomatoes – Harvest began last week. Quantity building quickly over the next several weeks with ripening due to the hot weather.

Shanghai Bok Choi - Quantity and quality available now.

Sweet Corn – Still the peak of season. Quantity available for supermarket buyers (8" size) with Argent and Silver King varieties. Good wholesale availability until at least the week after Labor Day. Quantity and quality varies after that due to fall insect pressures.

Tomatoes – The recent heat wave has continued to cause a lot of field ripening with this week's heat expected to continue this pattern. Watch for small supply gaps in the future as the heat has caused the ripening of various sequential plantings to run together. Volume will continue to increase this week.

White Potatoes – Harvest began two weeks ago. Quantity expected to build each week.

White Peaches - White Lady variety started picking last week with volume available this week. The quality and color of this fruit is excellent. Blushing Star and Sugar Giant varieties should be available by mid-August followed a few days later by Lady Nancy. Snow Giant follows a few days later about the third week of August.

Yellow Peaches – Red Haven variety available in quantity this week with excellent quality and color and good size. John Boy variety is also being harvested now in volume with excellent quality fruit and color. Bounty variety is ripening with great color and size now with harvest anticipated soon.

Yellow Squash – Good quality and large quantity available.

Zucchini - Good quality and large quantity available.

**Provided by the New Jersey State Department of Agriculture.*